

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 /082 W

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R 090631Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9936

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HAWAII

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 17716

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, NP

SUBJECT: THE CLIMATE OF INDO-NEPALESE RELATIONS: "GENTLE"
BREEZES FROM THE SOUTH

REF: KATHMANDU 4996 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL REPORTED THE INDO-NEPALESE ANNOUNCEMENT DECEMBER 2
OF MODIFICATIONS IN THE PROCEDURES FOR ENFORCING THE GOI'S
RESTRICTIONS ON THE TRAVEL OF NEPALESE CITIZENS IN CERTAIN
"SENSITIVE" AREAS OF NORTHERN INDIA. SINCE THESE CHANGES
ON THEIR FACE APPEAR SUBSTANTIALLY TO ALLEVIATE THE HARSHIPS
WHICH THE ORIGINAL PROCEDURES IMPOSED ON NEPALESE TRAVELERS,
WE ASKED NEPALESE COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY JAI RANA FOR HIS
OPINION CONCERNING THE GOI'S CONCILIATORY POSITION. RANA
REPLIED THAT THE GOI'S ACTIONS -- TIGHTENING THE SCREWS AND
THEN PARTIALLY LOOSENING THEM -- WERE DELIBERATE AND WERE
INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE NEPALESE THEIR DEPENDENCE
ON INDIA. RANA AGREED WITH THE POINT MADE REFTEL THAT THE
CHANGES MEET MOST OF THE GOI'S REQUESTS WITH THE EXCEPTION
OF DETAILS CONCERNING THE AUTHORITY OF THE INDIAN BORDER
POSTS TO ISSUE TRAVEL PERMITS ON THEIR OWN. HE EXPECTED
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THAT A MEETING WOULD "SOON" BE HELD IN DELHI TO RESOLVE THAT

QUESTION.

2. WHILE RANA INDICATED THAT THE GON WAS PLEASED WITH THE NEW PROCEDURES, HE EMPHASIZED THAT INDIA HAS IN NO WAY COMPROMISED ITS ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES: PREVENTING FURTHER NEPALESE MIGRATION TO THE NORTHEAST REGION AND DISPERSING THE NEPALESE POPULATION ALREADY RESIDENT THERE. QUERIED ABOUT WHETHER THE GOI WAS ACTUALLY TAKING STEPS TO THIS LATTER END, RANA SAID THAT HS EMBASSY AND FOREIGN OFFICE HAD BEGUN TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS FROM NEPALESE RESIDENT IN ASSAM AND PART OF SIKKIM STATING THAT THE GOI WAS UNDERTAKING A REGISTRATION OF NATIONALITIES IN THOSE AREAS AND THAT THEY FEARED THAT UNLESS THEY OPTED FOR INDIAN NATIONALITY THEY WOULD BE FORC'DV TO MOVE. RANA SAID THERE WAS LITTLE HIS GOVERNMENT COULD DO FOR THEM AND ADMITTED THAT A SIMILAR GON REGISTRATION PROGRAM IN THE TERAI WOULD LATER HAVE A COMPARABLE APPLICATION, I.E., PREVENTING INDIAN NATIONALS FROM HOLDING LAND IN THAT AREA.

3. ON THE TRADE AND TRANSIT TREATY, RANA SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE STILL TAKING PLACE AT THE EMBASSY-FOREIGN OFFICE LEVEL AND THAT IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL MORE MONTHS BEFORE ANOTHER ROUND OF FORMAL TALKS COULD BE HELD.

4. PROGRESS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT POWER AND IRRIGATION PROJECTS ON NEPAL'S RIVERS IS ALSO SLOW, ACCORDING TO RANA. HE RELUCTANTLY INDICATED THAT THE GON IS DRAGGING ITS FEET BUT EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS A RESULT OF THE ATMOSPHERE OF MISTRUST FOR WHICH THE INDIANS WERE RESPONSIBLE.
SCHNEIDER

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